

Church-Musick Vindicated.

A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H ' D

At *St. Bride's Church*, on Monday
November 22. 1697.

B E I N G
S^t CÆCILIA's Day,

The Anniversary Feast of the Lovers of Musick.

By *Nicholas Brady*, M.A. Minister of *Richmond*
in *Surry*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His
Majesty.

Published at the request of the STEWARDS.

L O N D O N,

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at *Charing-Cross*. 1697.



To the Stewards of St. Cæ- cilia's Feast.

Hugh Colvill Esq;	{	Leonard Wessell Esq;
Capt. Tho. Newnam		Paris Slaughter Esq;
Orlando Bridgman Esq		Jeremiah Clerk Gent.
Theophilus Butler Esq;		Fran. Le Riche Gent.

Gentlemen,

However favourable a Reception this Discourse might meet with, at the time and place of it's Delivery, when every body was disposed to Applaud Church-Musick, by the irresistible charms of that Admirable performance; which by a management peculiar to your selves, laboured under no inconveniencies of Disorder or Confusion: Yet now that the Pulpit is no longer backed by the Organ-Lost; when that which was spoken from the One, is no longer supported by what was acted in the Other; I have just reason to fear, that it will but indifferently answer, either

either the prepossession of those who heard it, or the expectation of those that did not.

Notwithstanding this, since only I am to be the Sufferer, and not the Cause; (which has been already too well defended by Abler Pens, to undergo any prejudice by the weakness of mine;) I shall gladly run that hazard in Compliance with your desire; and shall not dispute giving even this Dangerous Testimony, of that sincere Respect which shall be always paid you, by,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Obliged,

Humble Servant,

N. BRADY.

A

SERMON

Preached on St. *Cæcilia's* Day.

2 Chron. 5th Ch. 13th, & 14th, Verses.

13. *It came even to pass, as the Trumpeters and Singers were as one, to make one Sound to be heard in Praising and Thanking the Lord; And when they lift up their Voice, with the Trumpets and Cymbals, and Instruments of Musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever: That then the House was filled with a Cloud, even the Hou'e of the Lord;*
14. *So that the Priests could not stand to Minister by reason of the Cloud; For the Glory of the Lord had filled the House of God.*

WE do not (I think) meet in the whole Book of God, with a more *Signal* Instance of his favourable Acceptance, of that

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Devout Employment in which we are now
Conversant, (our praising him, and giving him
Thanks, with *Voices* and *Instruments of Mu-
sick*) than we have in those words which I
have now read to you, and which I have cho-
sen for the *Subject* of my following Discourse ;
where we find it makes up a very considerable
part, of one of the most Eminent Solemnities
of *Religion*, that we ever heard of under the
Legal Dispensation : A Solemnity Regulated by
the Wisest amongst Men ; and in which we can-
not suppose anything to have been allowed of ,
but what was suitable to the Gravity and Ma-
jesty of the occasion : It was *Solomon's* Dedicat-
ing that Glorious Temple, which was justly
Reputed the Noblest Structure in the World ;
and his Solliciting the Almighty, that he would
*Arise into his Resting-place, He and the Ark of
his Strength*. To set off a performance so Re-
markable as this, with all the Characters of a
becoming Grandour, he Summons the *Elders
and Heads of Tribes, and even all the Men of
Israel*, to attend him at *Jerusalem*, where ha-
ving offered up *Sheep and Oxen without num-
ber*, they accompanied the Priests who bore the
Ark

Ark of the Covenant, and conducted it with Reverence into the most Holy place; whilst to add to the Magnificence of the Ceremony, the *Levites which were the Singers, having Cymbals and Psalteries and Harps, stood at the East end of the Brazen Altar, and with them a hundred and twenty Priests Sounding with Trumpets*; as you may read in the Verses just preceding my Text. And certainly, if an incredible Multitude of Spectators and Assistants, if the quality as well as number of the Persons Assembled, if the Stateliness and Beauty of the Scene and Action, if a pompous expence of almost innumerable Sacrifices, and a Delightful Variety of all sorts of *Musick*, can give Life and Quickness, Majesty and Splendour to any performance; the Religious Festival which this Chapter gives an account of, may justly challenge the *preference* above all others, that ever occurred throughout the whole *Jewish Oeconomy*: And therefore we find, that according to God's method of proceeding with that People, whose more eminent Acts of Piety he usually Honoured, with some Sensible Demonstration of his favour, he Manifested his Approval of

this Devout Solemnity, by filling the *Temple* with his Glory, and giving visible Tokens of his more immediate Presence. But if amongst all those Religious performances, which were severally exercised upon this Solemn occasion, we may be allowed to Conjecture or Determine, which was most valuable in the sight of God; we may (I believe) very safely conclude, that it was not the bare Assembling themselves together, nor the Costly Pageantry of their Numerous Oblations; since these were but so many dumb shews of Religion, and a compliance only with the dead Letter of the Law;) But it was that *Lively Sacrifice of Praises and Thanksgiving*; that agreeable Melody, and Harmonious Consort of many Hearts and Voices, and Instruments *as one*; that drew down upon the devout performers, an unquestionable evidence of his Approbation; to this it was, that he set his own Seal, and made it (as it were) the Signal of his extraordinary Appearance: For we are not told, that he took any publick notice of all the foregoing Exercises of Devotion; But (says the Text) *it came even to pass, as the Trumpeters and Singers were as One, to make one*

one Sound to be heard in Praising and Thanking the Lord; and when they lift up their Voice with the Trumpets and Cymbals and Instruments of Musick, and praised the Lord; saying, For he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever; that then, (and not before) the House was filled with a Cloud, even the House of the Lord; So that the Priests could not stand to Minister, by reason of the Cloud; For the Glory of the Lord had filled the House of God. Such an Authentick Testimony of his favourably accepting, that Religious Entertainment which employs us at the present; as may justly encourage us to Repeat the Practice frequently, and may stop the Mouths of all Gainsayers. I shall therefore single out in my following Discourse, from the great variety of Matter with which my Tent abounds, some few instructive and useful Observations, which may be proper to the occasion of our present meeting together. And.

1st. We may from hence observe, that Musick whether Vocal or Instrumental, may both innocently and profitably be made use of in the publick Service and Worship of God.

2dly.

2dly. We may observe yet farther, that the proper Office of *Musick* in the Service of God, is to praise him, and give him thanks, because he is good; and because his Mercy endureth for ever.

3dly. We may observe in the last place, how Signal an evidence God has been pleased to give of his avow'd allowance and approbation, of this use of *Musick* in his Service.

1st. Then we may observe from the words of my Text, that *Musick* whether *Vocal* or *Instrumental*, may both *innocently* and *profitably* be made use of in the Publick Service and Worship of God.

Religion, however mistaken or misrepresented by some, is the most entertaining thing in Nature, attended by a good Conscience, which is a continual Refreshment; and Supported by the Assurance of God's Favour and Protection, which is the most certain Fund of Comfort and Satisfaction; if we take her portraiture from
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the Life, she will appear as bright and beautiful as an *Angel*; set off with all those Charms and and raising Attractions, which may most powerfully Recommend her to our Affections; allowing and encouraging the truest chearfulness, and not clashing with, or condemning any *Innocent Delights*: And therefore nothing has done her a greater prejudice, nothing has more hindered her Diffusiveness and Efficacy, than the false Draughts made of her by some sort of People, who would have her to consist in Moroseness and Austerity: They dress her up like a Fiend or a Fury, they aim her with Snakes and Whips, and Firebrands; and having thus made her an Object of Loathing and Aversion, they pretend to recommend her under so frightful an Appearance; It is through their means, who limn her after this hideous manner, that *Musick* her obsequious and useful Handmaid, has run the hazard of being Discarded from her Service; as if she were an Attendant too light and airy, to comport with the gravity of so reserved a Mistress. But in this they deal with her, as they did with the other, and represent her much different from what she really is; making that lightness essential

tial to her, which is purely accidental; and decrying that as her inseparable habit, which is only a loose Garment that she sometimes wears abroad, but which she always drops before her entrance into the *Church*. There she puts on such a Composedness and Solidity, as is suitable to the *Sacred Offices* in which she is employed, and may qualifie her to be made use of both, with *Innocence* and *Advantage*. And

1st. As to the *Innocence* of this Usage. It would be wholly unnecessary to insist upon this *Topick*; were there not a party of Men so unaccountably scrupulous, as to censure the *Harmony*, which is made use of in our Churches, as a sort of proceeding extremely culpable: These then are the Persons whom I would desire to consider, that that which has been the custom of good Men in all Ages, without any mark of God's disapproval; that which is so often recommended to our practice, by those who have been commissioned to convey his Order to us; that which is the Entertainment of the Blest above, in their perfect State of Purity and Felicity; that (I say) cannot be supposed with any shadow of Reason, to contract any guilt, or be liable

liable to any just censure: But this (we find) was a devout Emyloyment, in which the best of Men have been exercis'd frequently; witness the Songs of *Moses* and *Deborah*, before the whole Congregation of the People of *Israel*: Witness the *Divine* and *Musical* Compositions of *David*, *Solemon*, and others, for the Service of the *Temple*: Witness the Hymn that our Saviour sung with his Apostles who were then the Abridgment of the Christian Church, and those that were afterwards, in their solemn Assemblies, made use of by the Disciples and Followers of our Lord. This also we find recommended to our Practice, by those who revealed unto us the will of God; such as the Royal Psalmist, almost in every page; *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* in several places of their Prophecies; *St. Paul* in his Writings to the *Ephesians* and *Colossians*, and *St. James* in his Epistle to the Church in general; in all which we have frequent Exhortations to this Duty, as a positive part of our Religious Worship. In this we are assured that the Heavenly Host are always happily employed, where *Cherubim* and *Seraphim* continually rebound, *Holy, Holy, Holy,*

Lord God of Sabbath: Where the Four and twenty Elders that attend about the Throne, incessantly chant out their *Allelujahs*; and where those who have gotten the *Victory* over the *Beast*, unanimously joyn in singing the *Song* of the *Lamb*: Unless therefore we will unreasonably imagine, that God would be so far wanting to his best beloved Servants, as to suffer them to go on in a sinful course, without giving them any notice of the Error they lay under; unless we will Blasphemously suppose him so unfaithful to us, as to suffer us to be deluded by those who come to us in his Name, and who bring his own *Credentials* along with them; unless we will entertain absurd Notions of him, that he is inconsistent with himself, and admits of that in his Heavenly *Palace*, which is offensive to him upon his Earthly *Footstool*; we cannot conceive that this decent usage, which has so many Testimonials of his Favour, can be otherwise than highly *Innocent* in its self. It is true indeed, this Heavenly Art, has been sometimes abused, to the encouragement of Debauchery; and as the best things corrupted, contract the greatest illness,
so

so has this been made an instrument of looseness and sensuality; but if this were sufficient to exclude it from the *Temple*, when purified from that Alloy which debated it's value; *Poetry* as well as *Musick*, must be banished from our Churches, and the *Psalms* as well as *Harp of David*, must be forbidden to us; since the two Sacred Sisters have been equal Sufferers, having both been prostituted to the most scandalous Employments. Let us rather endeavour to snatch what we can of it out of the Hands of the prophane; to rescue this *Virgin*, out the power of her Ravishers; and to present her unblemished at the Altar of our God, where we may joyn Devotions with her, not only with *Innocence*, but with *Advantage* also. In order to which end, let us consider in the next place; what *profit* may redound to us from such a practice. Nothing is so proper or so available as this for composing our minds, and settling them in a Sedate and quiet posture; for reducing our straggling thoughts, and fixing them to their Duty; for calming and allaying our disorderly passions, or for lifting up the Soul in a devout Contemplation: When we

are thus entertained with the employment of *Angels*, our thoughts naturally ascend unto those Mansions of Joy; we have an intercourse, as it were with those Heavenly Inhabitants, and our Conversation seems to be altogether *above*: There is in *Musick* *Θείον τι*, something of Divinity, which Captivates the Affections, and Regulates them at it's Will; it acts upon the Soul with such a sweet Violence, as is almost insensible, but irresistible too; and I have heard many testify from their own experience, and I question not, but we have many present witnesses of the truth of it, that whenever they have been present at the performance of this nature, they have felt their zeal grow warm, if it were not kindled before, and encrease considerably if it were. Is the Spirit of the Lord to descend upon *Elisba*, and that upon an occasion, more extraordinary than usual? A Minstrel must be brought to play before him, and to make his Soul susceptible of the Divine Inspiration. Is *Saul's* Melancholy and Despair to be driven away, and his mind to be set in order, for the discharging his great Office? The *Harp* of *Da-*
wid

vid must apply the Medicine, and chase away his gloomy imaginations: Such was the power of that Sacred Lyre, when tuned to the Voice of the Sweet-Singer of *Israel*; and such would the effect of it remain to this day, if it were still touch'd by the same inimitable hand; but the unskilfulness of those that have played upon it since, has destroyed in a great measure the Melody of the Instrument; and it's Efficacy has lessened, as it's Harmony has been impaired. This Divine Art has such an admirable Secret of uniting Earth and Heaven together, that the Scale of *Musick* appears to me, to be the exact counterpart of *Jacobs Ladder*; with one end resting upon the Earth, in the material Organs that compose it, and the other end reaching up to Heaven, in the Life and Spirit of it's performances; upon the several Degrees of this, are the Holy Angels, those Celestial Choristers, perpetually Ascending and Descending; and the Lord himself stands at the top of it, to countenance and encourage the devout employment: Who then can with-hold at such an Heavenly Entertainment, where Devotion embraces Delight, and pleasure seems to be Spiritualized,
from

from breaking out with the Patriarch into his Rapturous Exclamation? Surely the Lord is in this place! This is none other than the House of God! And this is the Gate of Heaven! For indeed what Idea can we form to our selves, of those happy Regions of Joy and Tranquility, of which this will not be a most lively Transcript? What is Heaven, but an Assembly of Saints and Blessed Spirits, in the immediate presence of their Almighty Creatour, Rejoycing in the Service of so bountiful a Master, and celebrating his praises with their Voices and their Instruments? And such an imitation of them here, will qualifie us for their Society hereafter, when we with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company and Host of Heaven, shall laud and magnifie his Holy Name, and this leads me to the

2d, Observation, which may be drawn from the words of my Text, namely, That the proper Office of Musick in the Service of God, is to praise him, and give him thanks, because he is good, and because his Mercy endureth for ever.

The earliest instance which we have of Sacred Musick, are certain Songs of Triumph which were composed, to celebrate some Great and
Signal

Signal Deliverances; such as those already mentioned of *Moses* and *Deborah*: It's first Introduction into the *Jewish* Church, was by the grateful piety of King *David*; who appointed certain *Levites* to thank and praise God, in a form which he borrowed from one of his own *Psalms*, and which are the very words recorded in my Text; pursuant also to this, the Apostle advises us, that when we are merry, we should sing *Psalms*, for Musick being the most chearful way of exercising our Devotion, should therefore be appropriated to the most Delightful Act of Piety; and that is praising God for the manifold expressions, of his Goodness and Mercy towards the Sons of Men. All other Duties of Religion, seem to carry some sort of uneasiness along with them; for they either put us in mind of our ignorance and forgetfulness, as in hearing the Word; or of our wants and necessities, as in Prayer; or of our Sins and Infirmitie, as in Repentance; but Praise is such a Duty, as is entertaining in it's Nature, and carries no allay with it to damp our satisfaction: To Reflect upon the goodness of our God, and the many Signal Evidences which we have had
of

of his loving kindness; to thank him for those Mercies which we have already received, and thereby put our selves in a condition to expect fresh Blessings; this is nothing else but the perfection of Delight, and an employment the most desirable, and most Ravishing of any; *it is a good thing to sing praises unto our God, yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful:* And therefore this is the Religious Worship which is practised by the Church Triumphant in Heaven, as being not at all inconsistent with our conveniency of the most consummate Happiness. Indeed in our times of Humiliation, in the Acts of Mortification and Self-denial, when we afflict our Souls, and keep our Bodies under; *Musick* which is apt to elevate the Spirits, and Recreate the Senses, would appear as improper as *Mirth* at *Funerals*; but the Church has it's *Festivals* as well as *Vigils*; and where the occasions of Assembling together are of a more chearful nature, this delightful expression of our Gratitude is as Decent, as a becoming Dress, a Sprightly Air, or a Look that declares our inward Satisfaction. And certainly, if ever any People had just Reason

to join together their Voices and their Instruments, and to give the greater Evidences of a Devout Thankfullness; We of this Kingdom are most eminently obliged to it, upon the account of those Blessings which we have so lately experienced; when in stead of the Calamities of a dismal War, we find our Souls refresh'd with the *abundance of Peace*; and with *his safe Arrival* and long wished for presence, to *whom* we stand indebted for so precious a Treasure: Peace then is restored to us within our Walls, Peace that Banisher of *Discord*, that Mother of *Harmony*, that Band of Union to consenting Minds, that Nurse and Patroness of useful Arts and Sciences: This our long absent guest, condescends to visit us again; Let us receive her with Hearts overflowing with *Gratitude*; with a joy as great, as the *Advantages* she imparts; as Universal, as the Blessings she dispenses. And O! That all the several parties in this Kingdom, however formerly divided by interest or design, would Resemble the *Trumpeters and Singers* in the Text! That they were as one! That they would make one Sound to be heard, in Praising and Thanking the

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Lord!

Lord! That they *would* lift up their Hearts and their Voices together, with Trumpets and Cymbals, and Instruments of Musick; and with Joint consent would praise the Lord saying, For he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever! How delightful a Melody, would this Consort of Brethren that dwell together in Unity, make in the Ears of God our common Father! How certainly would he testify his Approbation of this Harmony, by filling the whole Nation with his Glory! Which brings me to the

3d. And last Observation, which may be deduced from the words of my Text; Namely, how *Signal* an Evidence God has been pleased to give us, of his avow'd Allowance and Approbation, of this use of Musick in his Service.

You may remember that I hinted to you in the beginning of this Discourse, after how indulgent and engaging a manner, God was wont to proceed with the People of the *Jews*, in Relation to their Acts of more Solemn Devotion; Such of these as were more Eminent and Remarkable, he frequently testified his Acceptance of, by some visible and extraordinary Token

ken of his Favour ; which was usually done , either by the Fire of God descending from Heaven, and Consuming their Sacrifices and Oblations, as in the great Contest between *Elijah* and the Priests of *Baal* ; or else filling the place of Worship with a Cloud, and with his Glory, as in the instance that is now before us. And to whatsoever Religious performances, we find these marks affixed of the Divine Approbation ; we may very safely conclude of them , that not only the Scope of the Action in general , but every particular Circumstance and Ceremony of it, was agreeable to his Will , and well-pleasing in his Sight ; For had there been a failure in any one part, God would never have set his own stamp upon it, to warrant it's currency and perfection. And therefore it was not barely *Solomon's* Dedication of the Temple, and his bringing the Ark into the Holiest of Holies ; but the Method and Manner also of his proceedings in it, his Assembling the Congregation, his offering up Sacrifices, his Praises and Thanksgivings, his Voices and his Instruments, whose usage was confirmed, and whose practice was approved of by God's Vouchsafe-

ment of the *Schekinah*, or Divine Presence. Let us not then question at any time, (when we exercise this Duty after this Solemn manner , in which we find it was Discharged upon this Eminent Occasion) but that God will countenance and encourage our performance , as a most acceptable part of Religious Worship : But if we expect to have it equally approved of, our management of it must be with equal Decency : We must banish from it all Disorder and Confusion, For *the Trumpeters and Singers were as one*, we must take the Subject of our Entertainment from the *Oracles* of God, and not dare to introduce into his Church, any such composures as are not Sacred and Solemn: For *they lift up their Voices , and praised God , saying, in the words of the Royal Prophet, For he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever :* Nor must those who are conversant in this Heavenly Employment, Dishonour God with their *Actions* , whilst they Honour him with their *Voices* ; for *they were the Levites and the Priests*, Persons Dedicated to his immediate Service, to whom this part of his Worship was intrusted : And I would to God ,
that

that all those who are constantly attendant upon this most Solemn Office of Religion, would consider the Honour and Gravity of their Calling; would look upon themselves, as enter'd into a lower sort of *Holy Orders*, being appointed to Minister to God in his *Temple*, and would never derogate from the Sacredness of their Employment, by an irregular Life, or an indecent Behaviour. Then would God declare his acceptance of this Service, by inward assurances of his favour; as he formerly testified his Approbation of it, by outward Evidences of his Presence. For though the *Jewish* Sacrifices are swallowed up, in that great Oblation which *Christ* offered once for all; though the *Temple* which was Dedicated, and the *Ark* which was placed in it, are both Superseded by the *Temple* of his Body, which was the true *Ark* of the Covenant of God; Yet Praises and Thanksgiving to our Almighty Benefactor; and this Delightful way of tending them, with the joynt Melody of *Voices* and *Instruments* of *Musick*; has continued ever since in the Church of God; will (I doubt not) remain in it
unto

unto the end of the World; and will afterwards attend it into the Mansions of Eternity; and make a considerable part of it's infinite Felicity. And this seems to me to be a Substantial Reason, why God here Distinguish'd it above the other Acts of Devotion, by vouchsafing his Presence at that particular juncture, because this was to outlast all the other Ceremonies; and to be a standing Duty in the Service of his Church, when the rest should vanish and be done away.

And now I have gone through with the Method I propos'd; I have vindicated the *innocence* and *usefulness* of Church Musick; I have shew'd upon what occasion it is most fitly employed, and have examined that Testimony of the *Divine Allowance*, which it has so eminently in the words of my Text. And tho' it might perhaps be expected upon this occasion; that I should say something of Musick in General, of its Antiquity and Excellency, it's force and energy, of that unaccountable Activity and surprizing Subtilness, by which it insinuates it self into our Veins, mixes with our Blood, and

and mingles with our Spirits ; *altering of a sudden the whole inward Frame*, and leading our Inclinations whether soever it pleases, but I shall think my self excusable , if I wave all this , since my Subject confines me wholly to *Church Musick* ; and I have endeavour'd to Accommodate my Discourse to my Subject ; by rather chusing to err upon the side of *Gravity*, than running any hazard of bordering upon *Lightness* And I shall now add no more to detain you from the Employment which I have been recommending , but only bewail the condition of those, whose unhappy *Aversion to Divine Harmony*, renders them unlike to the *Saints and Blessed Spirits*, which are continually busied in that Employment ; and congratulate the Happiness of their Circumstances, who by their Affection to this *Sacred Art*, are qualified to joyn with ineffable Raptures, in the Song of the ten Thousand times, ten Thousands of *Angels ; Blessing and Honour, and Glory and Power, be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

FINIS.